



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA PROPOSES TO ALLOW THE IMPORTATION OF TOMATOES FROM SOUSS-MASSA IN MOROCCO

WASHINGTON, May 15, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced a proposal to allow, under specified conditions, commercial shipments of tomatoes from the Souss-Massa region of Morocco into the United States.

To be eligible for importation, the tomatoes would have to be produced under certain conditions at both the production site and packinghouse to ensure they are free of fruit flies and other pests of concern. The tomatoes would also have to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the Moroccan national plant protection organization verifying that the tomatoes were grown in registered greenhouses in the Souss-Massa region. APHIS selected these measures to effectively mitigate the risk of introducing plant pests, such as the Mediterranean fruit fly, into the United States.

This action is scheduled for publication in the May 16 *Federal Register*.

Consideration will be given to comments received on or before July 15. Send two copies of postal mail or commercial delivery comments to Docket No. APHIS-2008-0017, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Comments can be submitted on the Federal eRulemaking portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2008-0017>. Click on "Add Comments" to view public comments and related materials available electronically.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov Web site and also can be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 690-2817.

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